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**REMINISCENCES OF GEN. U. S. GRANT, READ BEFORE  
ILLINOIS COMMANDERY LOYAL LEGION OF  
THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 27, 1910**

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**BY GEN. FRED. D. GRANT.**

Kind friends, companions of my father, I am indeed happy to be with you again, appreciating gratefully your warm reception, realizing, however, that it is not so much for me personally, all this kindness, as it is in honor of the memory of a loved one gone before; your old commander and comrade in arms, General U. S. Grant.

I have written out a few reminiscences which I venture to read, as requested to-night.

It was my great good fortune to be with my father, close at his side, much of the time during the Civil War, when I had the opportunity of seeing and listening to many of the noble and distinguished men, who were loyally serving their country during that great struggle; thus I had the honor and happiness of seeing and meeting our revered and martyred President, Abraham Lincoln.

In looking back to those dark days of the Civil War, I have distinct personal recollections, of the first two meetings between President Lincoln and my father, General U. S. Grant. These two occasions seem, to my mind, the most momentous and memorable in the history of our nation, as these meetings marked the beginning of the end of our great struggle for the existence of our Nation.

The principal and determined efforts of President Lincoln's administration were directed to the preservation of the Union, which, naturally, could not be accomplished without the success of the Union armies in the field. Up to the spring of 1864 the progress of the Civil War had not been satisfactory to the people of the North, and little success had been accomplished, except in the victories at Donelson, Vicksburg and Chattanooga.

After the Campaign of Chattanooga, the President and the people of the United States turned impulsively to General Grant as the leader of the Union armies, and a bill was introduced in Congress, reviving for him the grade of lieutenant-general, which grade had died with Washington (though Scott had held it by brevet). The enthusiastic members of the House of Representatives received the bill with applause. They made no concealment of their wishes, and recommended Grant by name for the appointment of lieutenant-general. The bill passed the House by a two-thirds majority, and the Senate with only six dissenting votes.

President Lincoln seemed impatient to put Grant in this high grade, and said he desired to do so to relieve himself from the responsibilities of managing the military forces. He sent the nomination to the Senate, and General Grant, who was at Nashville, received an order from the Secretary of War, to report in person at Washington. In compliance with this order, he left Chattanooga on March 5th for Washington, taking with him some members of his staff. My father also allowed me to accompany him there, I having been with him during the Vicksburg campaign and at Donelson. He reached Washington in the afternoon of March 7th, and went direct to the Willard's hotel. After making our toilets, my father took me with him to the hotel dining-room; there I remember seeing at the table next to where we were seated, some persons who seemed curious, and who began to whisper to each other. After several moments one of the gentlemen present attracted attention by striking on the table with his knife, and when silence was secured, he arose and announced to the assembled diners, that he had "the honor to inform them that General Grant was present in the room with them." A shout arose "Grant! Grant! Grant!" and people sprang to their feet wild with excitement, and three cheers were proposed, which were given with wild enthusiasm. My father arose and bowed, and the crowd began to surge around him; after that, dining became impossible, and an informal reception was held for perhaps three-quarters of an hour; but as there seemed to be no end to the crowd assembling, my father left the dining-room and retired to his apartments. All this scene was most vividly impressed upon my youthful mind.

Senator Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, ex-Secretary of War, soon called at the Willard's hotel for my father, and

accompanied him, with his staff, to the White House, where President and Mrs. Lincoln were holding a reception.

As my father entered the drawing-room door, at the White House, the other visitors fell back in silence, and President Lincoln received my father most cordially, taking both his hands, and saying, "I am most delighted to see you, General." I myself, shall never forget this first meeting of Lincoln and Grant. It was an impressive affair, for there stood the executive of this great nation, welcoming the commander of its armies. I see them now before me, Lincoln, tall, thin and impressive, with deeply-lined face, and his strong sad eyes; Grant, compact, of good size, but looking small beside the President, with his broad, square head and compressed lips—decisive and resolute. This was a thrilling moment, for in the hands of these two men was the destiny of our country. Their work was in coöperation, for the preservation of our great nation, and for the liberty of man. They remained talking together for a few moments, and then General Grant passed on into the East room, with the crowd which surrounded and cheered him wildly, and all present were eager to press his hand. The guests present forced him to stand upon a sofa, insisting that he could be better seen by all. I remember that my father, of whom they wished to make a hero, blushed most modestly at these enthusiastic attentions; all present joining in expressions of affection and applause. Soon a messenger reached my father, calling him back to the side of Mrs. Lincoln, and with her he made a tour of the reception rooms followed by President Lincoln, whose noble, rugged face beamed with pleasure and gratification.

When an opportunity presented itself for them to speak privately, President Lincoln said to my father: "I am to formally present you your commission to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock, and knowing, General, your dread of speaking, I have written out what I have to say, and will read it, and it will only be four or five sentences. I would like you to say something in reply which will soothe the feeling of jealousy among the officers, and be encouraging to the Nation." Thus spoke this great and noble peacemaker to the General who so heartily coincided with him in sentiments and work for union and peace.

When the reception was over at the White House, my father returned to Willard's hotel, where a great crowd was again assembled to greet him, and remained with him until a late hour of the night. After the crowd had dispersed, my father sat

down and wrote what he intended to say the following day, in receiving his commission promoting him to the lieutenant-generalcy and to the command of the Union armies.

I brought with me here to-night the original manuscripts of these speeches of Lincoln and Grant written by them at that time, which I preserve with care, thinking that you, my father's old comrades, might like to see them, and I shall be happy to show these manuscripts to you after this meeting is over.

Father proceeded to the White House a few minutes before 10 o'clock the next morning, permitting me to accompany him. Upon arriving there, General Grant and his staff were ushered into the President's office, which I remember was the room immediately above what is known now as the Green room of the Executive mansion. There, the President and his Cabinet were assembled, and after a short and informal greeting, all standing, the President faced General Grant, and from a sheet of paper, read the following:

"General Grant: The Nation's appreciation of what you have done, and its reliance upon you for what remains to be done in the existing great struggle, are now presented, with this commission, constituting you lieutenant-general in the Army of the United States. With this high honor devolves upon you, also, a corresponding responsibility. As the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you. I scarcely need to add, that with what I here speak, goes my hearty concurrence."

My father taking from his pocket a sheet of paper containing the words that he had written the night before, read quietly and modestly to the President and his Cabinet:

"Mr. President, I accept the commission with gratitude for the high honor conferred. With the aid of the noble armies that have fought in so many fields for our common country, it will be my earnest endeavor not to disappoint your expectations. I feel the full weight of the responsibilities now devolving upon me, and I know that if they are met, it will be due to those armies, and, above all, to the favor of that Providence, which leads both nations and men."

President Lincoln seemed to be profoundly happy, and General Grant deeply gratified. It was a supreme moment when these two patriots shook hands in confirming the compact that was to finish our terrible Civil War, and to save our united country, and to give us a nation, without master and without slave.

From the time of these meetings, the friendship between the President and my father was most close and loyal. President Lincoln seemed to have absolute confidence in General Grant, and my father always spoke of the President with the deepest admiration and affection. This affection and loyal confidence was maintained between them until their lives ended.

I feel deeply grateful to have been present when these two patriots met, on the occasion when they loyally promised one another to preserve the Union at all costs.

I preserve, always as a treasure, in my home, a large bronze medallion, which was designed by a distinguished artist at the request of the loyal citizens of Philadelphia, upon the happy termination of our great Civil War, and which is a beautiful work of art. Upon this bronze medallion are three faces, in relief, with the superscription: "Washington the Father, Lincoln the Savior and Grant the Preserver," emblematic of a great and patriotic trinity.

I remember with utmost interest my life and all of the incidents when with my father and his comrades during the Civil War, and I recall with deepest affection the men whom I met in the army. Much of my time was spent among the private soldiers, who were never too tired or worn out to comfort and pet the boy of thirteen—the son of the "Old Man." Young as I was then, my camp life was of such nature—I saw so much of the hardships, the self-denials, the sufferings and labors of both privates and officers—that my proudest moments are when I am associating with the old warriors—the Veteran Comrades of my father.

FREDERICK D. GRANT.

Read by General F. D. Grant to the Illinois Commandery of the Loyal Legion of the U. S. on January 27, 1910.